

March 2019 Meeting Communique

Another year has flown by and in late February the Alliance Executive sat down to review their performance and set the priorities and measures for the next 12 months. It was easy to see the exciting achievements that the target-projects (Indigenous and Native Fish) have achieved which are highlighted below. It was however, easy to underplay the substantial on-going benefits that the Alliance provides day after day for the Murray River corridor.

An obvious benefit is the sharing of knowledge and skills. A recent example is when the Sth Australia Murray-Darling Basin had the opportunity to re-s snag a number of the tributaries into the Murray River and contacted the Alliance for the person who heads the re-snagging program in the Goulburn Broken CMA. There was no need to re-invent the wheel, spend time finding contractors or missing out on the knowledge from a program that has been running for over 10 years.



Working across the three States has also proved to be a real benefit. It gives the flexibility to trial a new on-ground approach or technology in another State to not only provide 'proof-of-concept' but also develop the robustness across a range of environments. The three States are also increasing the career development opportunities for staff and they are moving between the organisations as well as developing their understanding of issues at a whole of Murray corridor scale.



The personal connections between staff are seeing landscape change happening. The Native Fish forum is an example where staff got together and the endangered Southern Pygmy Perch is now benefiting. Staff are sharing their expertise, and this has supported the efforts to re-populate a number of suitable sites.

The scale of the Alliance and the focus of on-ground change is finding partners and collaborations that are difficult to achieve as an individual organisation. The East -West Alliance (with the Noongar people in WA) is the obvious one

but there are others where the combined resources mean that a high level partnership becomes feasible.

Indigenous

In a really positive step, the Indigenous project is now headed by an Aboriginal-led and controlled organisation – the Outback Academy - with the Alliance as the key partner. The work is supported by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the partners are skills-based and include Allens Lawyers, Veolia, Jasper Coffee and Melbourne University. The Alliance's role is to provide the natural resource expertise and capability building.



The first task for the Alliance is to develop a customised land and water assessment tool using the best options from across the partners. The second is to create an integrated calendar of capability building activities and encourage the participation of the emerging Indigenous businesses. There is an up-coming workshop in May with the businesses and partners in South Australia hosted by the Ngopamuldi Aboriginal Corporation that aims to move the concept of 'Business incubators' towards reality.

Native fish

It has been very heartening to find that implementation is well underway for many of the priorities identified during the development of the Blueprint for Native Fish. This has meant a revisit of the priorities and delayed the actual publication of the Blueprint! This plan will now be out in late March.

The Native Fish project is also currently exploring how technology could enable live-virtual visits to comparable sites across the Murray Corridor to increase access, learning and collaboration.



Dry season ahead

No one needs to remind anyone of how dry the Murray River corridor is and is projected to be for the next 12 months. With this in mind, the Alliance is scoping a Land Resilience target-project to see if there is any opportunity for the Alliance to add value to what is already happening in each of the States.

Priorities for the next 12 months

In addition to the target projects and enhancing the on-going benefits, the broad priorities for the Alliance include telling the broader landscape or whole of Murray story; bringing investors into the Corridor and exploring non-traditional partners who share the value of the integrated approach to implementation.

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